

THE FLIGHT AND OTHER POEMS



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THE FLIGHT AND OTHER POEMS

BY

GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY

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G. E. W.

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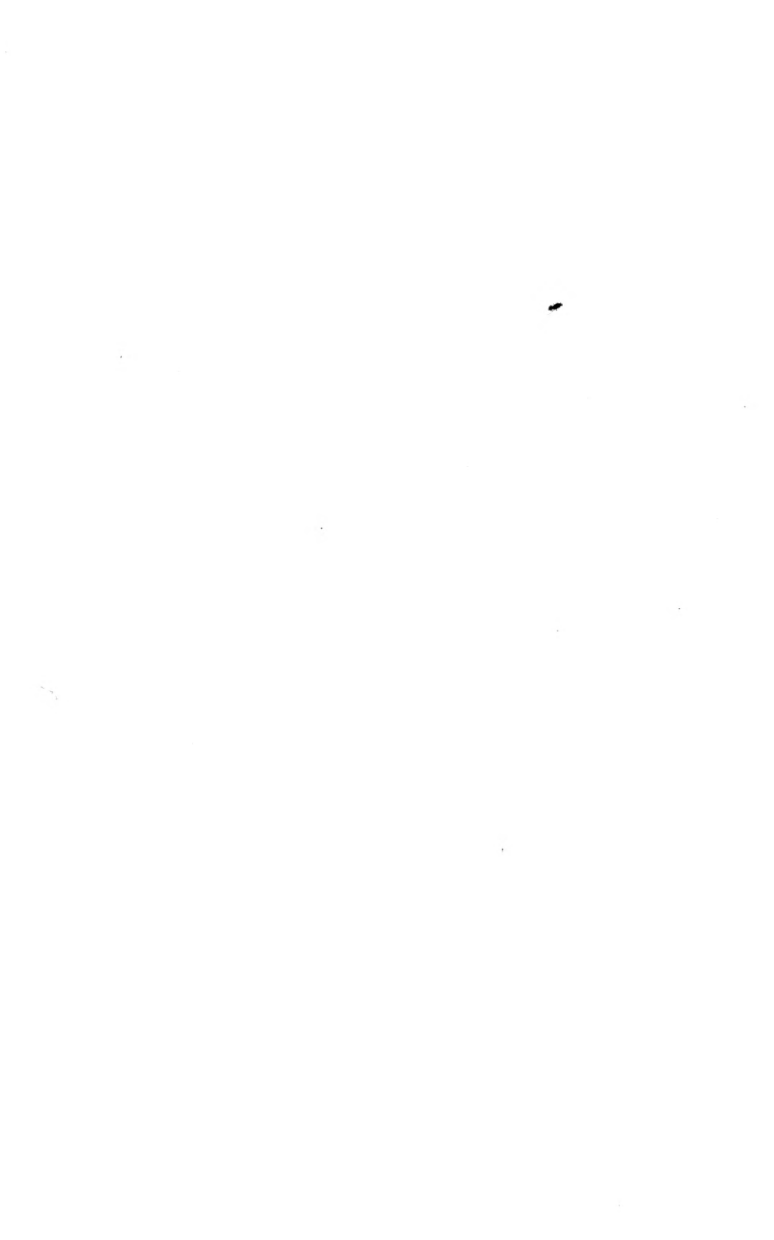
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PROEM





THE FLIGHT

I

O WILD HEART, track the land's perfume,
Beach-roses and moor-heather !

All fragrances of herb and bloom

Fail, out at sea, together.

O follow where aloft find room

Lark-song and eagle-feather !

All ecstasies of throat and plume

Melt, high on yon blue weather.

O leave on sky and ocean lost

The flight creation dareth ;

Take wings of love, that mount the most ;

Find fame, that furthest fareth !

Thy flight, albeit amid her host

Thee, too, night star-like beareth,

Flying, thy breast on heaven's coast,

The infinite outweareth.

II

“Dead o’er us roll celestial fires ;
Mute stand earth’s ancient beaches ;
Old thoughts, old instincts, old desires,
The passing hour outreaches ;
The soul creative never tires, —
Evokes, adores, beseeches ;
And that heart most the god inspires
Whom most its wildness teaches.

“For I will course through falling years,
And stars and cities burning ;
And I will march through dying cheers
Past empires unreturning ;
Ever the world-flame reappears
Where mankind power is earning,
The nations’ hopes, the people’s tears,
One with the wild heart yearning.”

**THE KINGDOM OF ALL-SOULS
AND OTHER POEMS**

To

MY FRIEND
JOHN ALPHONSE ARROUËT
I DEDICATE THESE ECHOES
OF AFRICAN DAYS

THE KINGDOM OF ALL-SOULS

I HEARD in my youth of a Kingdom, lying far
at the whole world's end,
And pilgrim-wise I clothed myself in my boyhood
there to wend ;
Through the beautiful, the dutiful, the holy high-
way ran,
So was I told, and it stretched through the midst
of all the glory of man ;
And all men spoke of the Kingdom, when they
looked on my face of joy,
And the souls of the dead spun the golden thread
in the heart of the silent boy.
So I lived with beauty and duty long ; and I flour-
ished in noble years ;
But I came not nigh to the Kingdom thereby ; and
my youth was thronged with fears ;

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For he who seeks only the Kingdom, goes lonely,
 however it be at the prime ;
Now, in man's estate, perplexed, desolate, I looked
 forward and back through time.

For a curious thing had happened in the lands
 where eternally
Blows the mighty breath of the Trades of Death
 by the old remembering sea ;
Incredible was the leap and sweep of my astonished
 sense ;
Stars in their burning unveiled to me yearning
 their spirit-throngs intense ;
And on glimmering seas Tripolitan borne, bright
 as to Jacob's eye,
I saw, all the night, forms whose substance was
 light move in the gold on high ;
And on earth the fire-fountains and snowy
 mountains that first poured the power of man,
Blue blown spaces and sandy places where his
 racing raptures ran ;

And whatever his soul has fashioned fairest,
carved or painted or sung,
On my eyes, in my ears, on my moving lips, ever
divinely hung.

Then was I ware in my mystic self of a discord
shaping there,
And a darkness filmed my outward eye and netted
the visual air ;
Man in the strife of his sorrowing life had such
power upon my sight ;
In the stench and murk of Sicilian mines I lost my
ways of light ;
For a youth with a torch came gazing on me, with
the nude archaic line
That I loved in the marbles of Athens, and the fire
of his soul sank in mine ;
The woe of his eyes, the want of his limbs, the
intimate look of his soul, —
Who shall measure the wave of passion that from
spirit to spirit may roll !

And, year after year, grew poverty dear; and
thereat I wondered then,
That my soul issued first unto wan lives accurst in
the loveliest lands of men.

Then I said to my Spirit beside me tall: "I have
fear — this is some charm
That the Impish Ones have wrought upon me to
do me malignant harm,
That for the blood-wasted and beauty-blasted I lay
bright worship by, —
Hover above it — sink in it — love it, — 'tis some
charm of the Evil Eye!"
But my Spirit beside gathered height in his pride.
Then a greater wonder arose,
Whereat my delicate being aloof with the horror
thereof froze;
For I saw in the den of a prison-pen, on a peak of
Argos' coast,
Men whom whips compel, mould as in hell the
matrix of the Host;

Murderers, thieves, and every brood of dark and
heinous sin

Forged in that shed the seal of God's Bread, that
stamps Christ's name therein.

Since then I have taken man's hands in mine, and
nevermore felt shame,

Such unearthly light upon my soul-sight in that
flooding moment came ;

And I mixed with all races in primitive places,
wherever we might meet,

In the gangway of the nations, drunken tavern,
desert street ;

And I saw men's souls unsheltered and bare, as one
seeth eye to eye, —

This the wonder, this the marvel, that my nature,
all awry,

Trembling ever turned most truly to the lower and
the worse.

Then I said, abashed, to my Spirit, who flashed :
“This is some terrible curse

That Heavenly Wrath sends on my path, that I
lose from my soul the awe
Of all justice human, eternal, — I, who was born
in the law !”

Then my Spirit brightened as a cloud that light-
ened ; and I heard o’er confusions within
The Voice that comes over chaos when a new
world shall begin :

“I have cleansed thy eyes of beauty ; I have
cleansed thy heart of duty ;

I am soul that brightens from thee, seeing spiritual
beauty, —

Greatens, doing spiritual duty ; incorruptible is
spirit, —

Nought to thee the vesture meaneth, gleam or
gloom that men inherit ;

Thou art waking in the Kingdom, where through
shadows half-divined

The dark planet moves up slowly to the glory of
the mind ;

Past the sensual, past the moral, now thy being
newly rolls, —

Thou art living, thou art breathing, in the Kingdom
of All-Souls !”

I lay in the darkness hushed and o’erawed, as the
sense of the words sank in, —

One human spirit that all men inherit, undeprived
by their woe or their sin ;

No curst servile races, no virtue-throned places ! —
and splendors o’er me ran, —

Above me immense, gathering light intense, with
the beautiful form of man,

The Spirit stood bright in angelical might, and his
countenance beamed afar,

Born with our birth for dominion o’er earth,
Master and Lord of our Star ;

Heaven shook with the rays from his arrowy hand,
and the stars in the zenith grew wan, —

I saw, I know, in that mighty glow the foregleam
of some dawn ;

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And as a gold pillar of sunrise that flamed, and a
mounting glory showered,
Majestical over my dark form that soul of morning
towered.

WHAT THE STARS SANG IN THE DESERT

I WOKE in the desert rude
O'erhung by the star-sweet sky,
And ever the radiant multitude
In the silence drew more nigh,
As if on my eyes to brood,
And inward glory nurse,
And out of the heart of the universe
Soared forth my singing cry :

“We are young — our song up-springing
The crystal blue along,
Creation's morning singing, —
It was but children-song,
Melodiously ringing,
Mysteriously forewarning
The realm beyond the morning
We infinitely throng.

“We sit in our burning spheres
 Illimitably hung ;
By the speed of light we measure the years
 On purple ether flung ;
 Without a shadow time appears,
 A calendar of echoing lights
That flame and dusk from depths and heights,
 And all our years are young.

“We are borne through darkness streaming
 Wherein our glory glides ;
We dower the deep with the beaming
 Where prophecy resides ;
 Forevermore we are dreaming,
 Still in the springtime blossom
Of thoughts that light our bosom
 And beat our glowing sides.

“Wide the abyss ; we span it,
 Who showering a bright spark came,
And forever we smite it and fan it

Forth from the forging flame, —
Life, flower of the planet,
Flower of the fire, supernal,
Burning, blooming, eternal, —
A million names are his name.

“We tremble; we thrill heaven’s ocean
With the myriad-glittering quest;
Aspiration and devotion
From the prime were our brooding nest;
And youth, — ’tis breathed emotion,
A seeing and a hearkening,
A gleaming and a darkening,
And a whispering to the breast.

“Then with bright hands uplifted
We strike the thousand lyres;
The music, on dreams drifted,
Pours all the world’s desires;
And ever the song is sifted
From the heart of youth forecasting

The unknown everlasting
That bathes us and inspires.

“We gaze on the far flood flowing
Unimaginably free,
Multitudinous, mystical, glowing,
But all we do not see;
And a rapture is all our knowing,
That on fiery nerves comes stealing,
An intimate revealing
That all is yet to be.

“When sheathed and glacial o’er us
Arcturus courses cold,
And dry and dark before us
Aldebaran is rolled,
Far-clustering orbs in chorus
Shall light the pealing sky,
And throne to throne reply,
‘The heavens grow not old.’”

Round the desert wild and eerie
The starry echoes clung;

In a region weird and dreary
The golden song was sung ;
Over lands forlorn and weary,
Where the drifting white sand only
Drifts anew the sand-wreath lonely,
The radiant silence hung.

THE RIDING

I SAID to my young soul riding,
“Thou shalt not await the hour,
Though no strength in thy arm be abiding,
Though thy virtue hath put forth no flower,
And life be all thy having,
And only hope thy dower ;
Courage will fly from thy laggard breast
Till thy sword be out, and thy lance in rest,
And ever the deed that man does best
Is a deed beyond his power.”

I ride in lands of danger
Where wakes unknown alarm ;
But the strength that I find there is stranger
Than is any magical charm ;
From the grave is this befriending,
And it hides in my life-blood warm ;

From hearts that are dust is the nameless flow,
The strengthless dead in my muscles glow,
And I muse, as I lean o'er the monstrous foe,—
 “It was my father's arm.”

Through wide wastes I ride finding
 Strange sights by lonesome strands ;
And wounds that none knows I stoop binding
 Through the dumb and woeful lands ;
Out of my body goes healing
 From the touch of my wandering hands ;
But my hands that I feel go confessing
Strange wrongs, and strange sacrifice blessing,
The dark children of sorrow caressing, —
 They are not my mortal hands.

I set the reed to my lips,
 Where my soul and my breath are wed ;
On far heights the song from me slips,
 Down the slopes of the world it has sped ;
Out of my heart that goes mourning
 The beautiful life has fled ;

But my song that I hear go singing,
Half over the wide world winging,
To the hearts and lips of men clinging,
Is the breath of poets dead.

Through dark night I go dreaming
Where unknown oceans roll ;
My thoughts, in flights, sweep gleaming
With the spirit's aureole ;
I know not where they have vanished
That from my bosom stole ;
But my dream that goes unreturning,
Fulfilled of the millions yearning,
And wraps the whole world burning,
Is the flaming of man's soul.

Through endless barren spaces,
Apart from all men thrown,
I ride through lonely places
In ways to no man known,
With none before nor after,
But I do not ride alone ;

Though there none names me brother,
I am ware, in my heart, of some other,
And my deeds are the deeds of another,
And none of my deeds is my own.

I never saw them shining
In that phantasmal air;
But I feel dark hearts inclining
Round mine, in hostings fair;
Though I ride sole and lonely,
They are thousands everywhere;
In the scarlet desert sterile,
By the beaches' stormy beryl,
They stand about my peril,
And I can feel them there.

They lean from old bronzed races
Who plied red spears at morn;
They troop from nameless places,
The lords of shame and scorn;
And the souls of the uncreated
Flock to the way forlorn;

I feel them grope and hover,
Where dark night clouds me over,
On the route of the lonely lover
Of the dead and the unborn.

Out of the unapparent
Doth the breath of all being blow ;
From a million natures errant
Doth the stream of man's blood flow ;
The nerves are the burning current
Of the universe aglow ;
Of the infinite was my making,
And I ride of the infinite taking
The strength that knows no breaking,
Wheresoever I go.

IN THE OASIS

IT was a paradise of trees
In the blue vague of sand and sea ;
An isle of ocean histories,
An unknown isle, it seemed to me ;
A precinct of the ancient grove,
Sacred to fruit and corn and peace ;
Old as the spring of life and love,
It seemed a bank where time might cease.

It was a tract of sky and palm
Where yellowing waters ooze and run,
And dark folk dwell amid the calm
Of earthen shadows red and dun ;
They brought me gourds of liquor pale
The cut palm yields at break of dawn ;
In hearts so simple could not fail
The kindness out of nature drawn.

So voyagers whose victorious keel
First swam the lone Pacific floods,
Felt morn's mysterious lights unseal
The tribes of ocean solitudes ;
And found the bloom without decay,
The life through fading centuries sown,
That flower-like lifts a little way
Its head to heavens that soar unknown.

There Carthage led her navied host,
Passing the desert solemn ;
And nigher rose on that sparse coast
Rome's eagle-bearing column ;
The distant centuries lapsed away,
But nothing here knew time had flown ;
The small dark race that moulds the clay
Outlasts the race that built in stone.

You wonder how I understand
Man's soul in dusky faces,
And, though a stranger in the land,
A friend roved that oasis ;

They strove to please with gentle art,
Soft smiles and silent duty ;
Unconsciously they soothed my heart
With touches of wild beauty.

I twined my soft gray hat with bloom
They brought me in the desert bowers,
And wound along the palm's white plume
The dark-leaved red pomegranate flowers ;
I wandered, thoughtless of the lure,
Beside the burning sapphire sea ;
The bronzed boys laughed, and sat demure,
And every eye shot love at me.

Ah, never moves man far apart
From kinship and from duty,
And straightest unto every heart
Winds the old path of beauty ;
They showed me all the secret isle,
They brought me all their meagre store,
And many a child's caressing smile
Followed me down to the sea-shore.

It was a paradise of trees

In the blue vague of sand and sea ;

An isle of antique histories,

A long-lost isle, it seemed to me ;

They rowed my boat, I sailed away

To lands beyond the western star ;

Like something lost my natal day,

Within my mind these memories are.

THE WINGED EROS OF TUNIS

RECOVERED FROM THE SEA NEAR MAHDIA
IN 1904

BEAUTIFUL bronze boy, wing
Of the golden age in flower
With the bloom of an Asian spring,—
Sheathless beauty and power ;
Life in its delicate fuse
Of first thought, first desire, —
Of Meleager's muse
The radiance and the fire !

Thy loveliness disdained
A rude barbarian fate ;
No Christian touch profaned
Thy form inviolate ;
But plunged in ocean-peace
The blue waves did thee cover ;
A score of centuries
Thou hadst the sea for lover.

Late thence emerging now
 Into the gray light wan,
Thou bringest the youthful brow
 The world's dawn rests upon.
Strange is the sight, forlorn
 The heart with the sense thereof,
Beautiful boy, reborn
 Of the waves for our worship and love.

THE REVENANT

IT was at Tunis, in the shop
I told you of, where women stop,
And falls the perfume, drop by drop,
That first he came,
Who in my own flesh clotheth him,
And drugs my soul with memories dim,
And fills my body to the brim,
A perfumed flame.

I know new meanings in the rose,
Old channels in my sense unclosed,
Along my nerves the music goes
Of ancient time ;
And I am changed to what has been, —
Silk-robed, and turbaned with the green,
I try the thin edge damascene
Of secret crime.

To leaner sheaths my spirit shrinks,
And long-forbidden pleasures drinks ;
The mindless life that never thinks,
 Crumbles my soul ;
And o'er the ruined yellow wall
Of what I was, there groweth tall
A flower, whose incense like a pall
 Doth round me roll.

I hear a padding on the stones,
There comes a terror in my bones,
A throttling stills my crumpled moans
 And little cries ;
And who is he sits in my place,
A lithier soul, a softer grace,
A lore of ages in his face,
 And world-wise eyes ?

The Revenant ! in every clime
He uses me to be the mime
Of weird things acted in the time
 Of long-ago ;

What mysteries of heart and brain,
What forms of beauty, forms of pain,
The sun shall never see again,
Revive and glow !

A thousand years has he been clay
Who from me takes the soul away,
And in my body makes his play,
Do what I can ;
Strange visitant, in myriad shapes,
Who in myself my being apes !
Ah, nowhere now my soul escapes
The Ghost of Man.

THE BLUE STAR

WHAT I remember of the soul
That out of darkness on me stole,
Is just a blue star, like a mole,
Upon her brow, —
And then, her arms and ankle-rings;
A nameless mystery of things
Inscrutable about her clings,
And charms me now.

A mountain woman, Djelfa's child,
Whose foot had never left the wild,
She draws from nature undefiled
Her swaying grace;
Her body sparkles like a gem
Beneath the gold coins' clinking hem, —
Her throat an oleander stem,
A flower her face.

Out of the solitude she came
Into the waste without a name ;
Dancing, she seems the wind-blown flame
 Of desert fires ;
Her beauty burns beneath the stars,
Her journeys no horizon bars,
In lands where nought the freedom mars
 Of man's desires.

With lids that doze in panther sleep
Bedouins upon her motions keep
Their couchant eyes whose forward leap
 She holds at gaze ;
Of love that dwells beneath the tent
She makes her body eloquent ;
At every step a veil is rent, —
 The passions blaze.

I hear the tinkle of her feet
In world-wide rhythms darkly sweet,
That, drop by drop, my veins repeat,
 Like violin-strings ;

To the mute cadence of her hips
A growth of ages from me slips, —
In morning worlds my body dips
 Primeval springs.

It seems a life before the Flood
Is hers, — and hers the brotherhood
Of all that swam or flew or stood
 In old marsh-lands ;
A hundred centuries have rolled
To her the desert's tribute gold ;
Dancing, she saw the world grow old
 In buried sands.

And then, — how strange my fancies are ! —
I saw the dance, retreating far,
Diminish into that blue star,
 Just like a mole ;
It came upon me in the gloom
And grave dusk of the sombre room,
Soft as a disk of moth-wing bloom, —
 The moth, her soul.

The dance was done. In gentle mood
A slender girl before me stood,
The slip of desert womanhood
 My memory keeps ;
But most the vision to me brings
The mystery of human things, —
How spirit unto spirit springs .
 Across what deeps.

Ah, had we power to enter in
To Nature's innocence of sin,
What revelations might begin
 For you and me !
Oft through the wide world as I go,
I mind me where the date-palms grow,
And on a brow, serene and low,
 The blue star see.

THE LEOPARD

IN lands where only jackals call,
And only vulture-shadows fall
Day-long, beside a city wall,
Did this betide.

'Twas night; the sands were camel-strewn;
Around me was a world unknown;
Far off the drifted desert blown,
A bugle died.

I felt dim shapes of thought arise,
Which turn to stone the human eyes
That long have gazed on desert skies,
Far from mankind;
Grim mammoth things that come unbid,
In the great pit of being hid,
Kin to the Sphinx and Pyramid,
Unhinged my mind.

Grotesque enchantments that begin
In motions of the twisted drin,
Wound in my senses, and within
My spirit stirred ;

The desert magic o'er me drew
Cast skins of nature she outgrew,
Worn in the time she man foreknew
In beast and bird.

I seemed a creature strange, apart,
Crept from a crevice of the heart
Of things, — to come and to depart, —
A foot, a face ;

There, peering in my hour of light
Upon the centuries' ageless flight,
I held the whole world on my sight, —
All time, all space.

One moment, robed in starry air,
As 'twere a spangled leopard there,
I crouched, — and slipped back unaware
Into all things ;

As when the phoenix melts in flame,
The soul of matter went and came,
And in one throb great nature's frame
Folded its wings.

How dark it was, when I came back
Along the spiritual track
To my own world ! how mortal black
The city wall,—
The forms of men like shadows seen,
Sleeping the camel-heaps between,
Unconscious of the spectral scene,
The jackal's call !

THE WHITE BONE

WHEN first I saw the city lone
Lift on the blue its burial-stone,
“Look,” said I, “where the desert’s bone
Gleams in its mouth !”

The bleachèd light across the plain
Stamped the grim image on my brain,
Of bones that trail the camel-train
In burning droughth.

Alone that skeleton city stands,
By none remembered, in lost lands,
And miles about are blown the sands
Like a red sea ;
And in the night the stars that lean
Over that spectreless pale scene,
Shudder at what there once had been
Man’s memory.

'Tis strange how such a fancied thing
Will shape and stain our visioning.
I saw the beast's fawn-stripes en-ring
 The preying mouth ;
And when I lay at night alone,
I seemed myself that ruin shown,
Gnawed by the sands, like a white bone
 In the red south.

The wrecks of eld in me were met ;
A million suns had on me set ;
The wild sand heaped the parapet,
 Ribbed in long bars ;
There sat my soul, with time o'er-grown,
And saw on heaven's wide prospect thrown,
The orb that bears the death-white bone
 Among the stars.

What longings shook me for my youth
Still unimpregnated with truth,
Unpacked, brain-deep, with mental ruth,
 From old time free!

To have once more my soul my own,
That was of God the monotone,
When I was young, ere I was grown
Man's soul to be!

Then the Wraith spoke within me: "Who
Shall tell my age? arisen anew,
Out of antiquity I drew
A subtle thing;
Borne flaming from my backward wake,
New exhalations from me flake,
And the past glories upward take
The Eternal Wing."

But often when the Wraith is dumb,
That Incubus will on me come,
And hoarse I hear my heart-beats drum,
Awake, alone;
And aye it is a fearsome sight,
When flashes on me in the night
The image of the beast bedight
With the white bone.

THE WAY

BY wisdom that cometh at night and by stealth
The soul of a man is made free ;
It is not in the giving of learning or wealth, —
The divine gift, liberty ;
But these things shall bind on him chain on chain
Of inward slavery ;
He shall lay earthly things on an earthen altar,
And go out from all gods, nor turn back, nor
falter,
And he shall follow me.

He shall do the deeds of the great life-will
That is manifest under the sun ;
He shall not repine though he doeth ill
It repenteth him to have done ;
Behold, he is brother to thousands
Who before was brother to none ;

And because all his deeds are done in the spirit,
Great is the love that he shall inherit,
And all other gain shall he shun.

He shall not take note what another hath,
Or what to himself is due ;
He shall not give heed what another saith,
Or to doctrines false or true ;
He shall lead the life, he shall follow the path,
And all things shall come to him new ;
And he shall pluck from the life in his bosom,
Flower by flower, the eternal blossom,
Rose, rosemary, and rue.

He shall not make narrow his heart with truth,
Nor wall for another the way ;
He shall not give a bond in the days of his youth
Against his manhood's day ;
And he shall go out from all aloof,
And alone in his heart shall he pray ;
And to him in the fulness of time shall be given

To have no master on earth or in heaven,
But he shall be master alway.

He shall do the will that is stronger than his ;
He shall act in the infinite ;
He shall not draw back for sorrow or bliss, —
He shall bear the embrace of it ;
So shall he create all things anew, —
Not parcel the old, bit by bit ;
And to him shall be known that the glory of living
Is to love, be it receiving or giving,
And his heart with the whole shall knit.

In the dark of the dawn we are waifs blown forth,
Above great oceans to roll,
Of powers that never measured the worth
Of bird, or beast, or soul ;
And bridals of contingency
The fires of our youth control ;
But whether we soar, or swoop, or hover,
Only the lover all the world over
Hath the freedom of the whole.

For I wandered forth without a mate
My bread with the poor to find ;
The learned, the rich, the good, the great,
I left in their niches behind ;
I had only a lover's heart in my breast,
And a world's dead lies in my mind ;
In the life of the poor I escaped my prison,
Like a soul from the grave had my free soul arisen
To live in the unconfined.

BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL

I RODE in the dark of the spirit
A marvellous, marvellous way ;
The faiths that the races inherit
Behind in the sunset lay ;
Dome, mosque, and temple huddled
Bade farewell to the day ;
But I rode into the leagues of the dark,
There was no light but my hoof-beats' spark
That sprang from that marvellous way.

Behind were the confined gods in their shroud
Of jungle, desert, and mound,
The mighty man-bones and the mummies proud
Stark in their caves underground ;
And the planet that sepulchres god and man,
Bore me in the cone of its dark profound
To the ultimate clash in stellar space,
The way of the dead, god-making race
Whirled with its dead gods round.

And my heart, as the night grew colder,
Drew near to the heart of my steed ;
I had pillowed my head on his shoulder
Long years in the sand and the reed ;
Long ago he was foaled of the Muses,
And sired of the heroes' deed ;
And he came unto me by the fountain
Of the old Hellenic mountain,
And of heaven is his breed.

So my heart grew near to the heart of my horse,
Who was wiser, far wiser than I ;
Yet wherever I leaned in my spirit's course,
He swayed, and questioned not why ;
And this was because he was born above,
A child of the beautiful sky ;
And now we were come to the kingdoms black,
And nevermore should we journey back
To the land where dead men lie.

Now whether or not in that grewsome air
My soul was seized by the dread *cafard*,

Terror of deserts, I cannot swear ;

But I rode straight into an orbèd star,
Where only reigned the spirit of good,
And only the holy and virtuous are ;
And my horse's eyes sent forth sun-rays,
And in my own was a noon-tide gaze
That mastered that splendid star.

The madness of deserts, if so it be,

Burned in my brain, and I saw
The multitudinous progeny
Of the talon and the claw ;
And Mammon in all their palaces
Gaped with a golden maw ;
And we rode far off from the glittering roofs,
And the horse, as he passed, with his heaven-
shod hoofs
Broke the tables of their law.

And we came to a city adjacent thereby,
For the twain to one Empire belong ;

Black over it hung a terrible cry
From eternal years of wrong ;
And the land, it was full of gallows and prisons
And the horrible deeds of the strong ;
And we fled ; but the flash of my horse's feet
Broke open the jails in every street,
And lightning burned there long.

We were past the good and the evil,
In the spirit's uttermost dark ;
He is neither god nor devil
For whom my heart-beats hark ;
And I leaned my cheek to my horse's neck,
And I sang to his ear in the dark :
“There is neither good nor evil,
There is neither god nor devil,
And our way lies on through the dark.

“Once I saw by a throne
A burning angel who cried, —
‘I will suffer all woes that man's spirit has known,’
And he plunged in the turbid tide ;

And wherever he sank with that heart of love,
 He rose up purified ;
Glowed brighter his limbs and his beautiful face,
And he went not back to the heavenly place,
 And he drew all men to his side.

“I have never heard it or learnt it,
 It is in me like my soul,
And the sights of this world have burnt it
 In me to a living coal, —
The soul of man is a masterless thing
 And bides not another’s control ;
And gypsy-broods of bandit-loins
Shall teach what the lawless life enjoins
 Upon the lawless soul.

“When we dare neither to loose nor to bind,
 However to us things appear ;
When whatsoever in others we find,
 We shall feel neither shame nor fear ;
When we learn that to love the lowliest
 We must first salute him our peer ;

When the basest is most our brother,
And we neither look down on nor up to an-
other, —

The end of our ride shall be near.”

A wind arose from the dreadful past,
And the sand smoked on the knoll;
I saw, blown by the bolts of the blast,
The shreds of the Judgment scroll;
I heard the death-spasms of Justice old
Under the seas and the mountains roll;
Then the horse who had borne me through all
disaster,
Turned blazing eyes upon me his master,
For the thoughts I sing are his soul.

And I sang in his ear, — “ ’Tis the old world
dying

Whose death-cries through heaven are rolled;
Through the souls of men a flame is flying
That shall a new firmament mould;

54 THE FLIGHT AND OTHER POEMS

And the uncreated light in man's spirit

Shall sun, moon, and stars unfold ;”

Then the horse snuffed the dark with his nostrils
bright,

And he strode, and he stretched, and he neighed
to the light

That shall beam at the word to be told.

COMRADES

WHERE are the friends that I knew in my
Maying,

In the days of my youth, in the first of my
roaming?

We were dear; we were leal; oh, far we went
straying;

Now never a heart to my heart comes hom-
ing! —

Where is he now, the dark boy slender

Who taught me bare-back, stirrup and reins?

I loved him; he loved me; my beautiful, tender
Tamer of horses on grass-grown plains.

Where is he now whose eyes swam brighter,

Softer than love, in his turbulent charms;

Who taught me to strike, and to fall, dear fighter,
And gathered me up in his boyhood arms;

Taught me the rifle, and with me went riding,
Suppled my limbs to the horseman's war;
Where is he now, for whom my heart's bidding,
Biding, biding — but he rides far?

O love that passes the love of woman!
Who that hath felt it shall ever forget,
When the breath of life with a throb turns human,
And a lad's heart is to a lad's heart set?
Ever, forever, lover and rover,
They shall cling, nor each from other shall part
Till the reign of the stars in the heavens be over,
And life is dust in each faithful heart!

They are dead, the American grasses under;
There is no one now who presses my side;
By the African chotts I am riding asunder,
And with great joy ride I the last great ride.
I am fey; I am fain of sudden dying;
Thousands of miles there is no one near;
And my heart — all the night it is crying, crying
In the bosoms of dead lads darling-dear.

Hearts of my music — them dark earth covers ;
Comrades to die, and to die for, were they ;
In the width of the world there were no such
rovers —

Back to back, breast to breast, it was ours to stay ;
And the highest on earth was the vow that we
cherished,

To spur forth from the crowd and come back
never more,

And to ride in the track of great souls perished
Till the nests of the lark shall roof us o'er.

Yet lingers a horseman on Altai highlands,

Who hath joy of me, riding the Tartar glissade ;
And one, far faring o'er orient islands

Whose blood yet glints with my blade's accolade ;
North, west, east, I fling you my last hallooing,

Last love to the breasts where my own has bled ;
Through the reach of the desert my soul leaps
pursuing

My star where it rises a Star of the Dead.

**THE POET IN ITALY AND OTHER
POEMS**

To the Poet

SALVATORE DI GIACOMO

I DEDICATE THIS TRIBUTE TO THE BEAUTY
AND THE HEART OF ITALY.

THE POET IN ITALY

IMITATED AFTER RENATO RINALDI'S "IL GIROVAGO"

A RAGGED, sweet little fellow
Slips — Heaven knows whence — into view,
Jestingly greets me his mellow,
 "What's new?"
— "What's new? Not a thing. Tranquil
I leave things as they are,
And the words and the song gush upward
The same as ever they were."

There's a door where I make a great clatter —
Hands in pockets — kick fair;
Cries a voice — I know well its chatter —
 "Who's there?"
— "Same as ever to-day 'tis —
Drinks the fountain, and goes on his way —
Up the peaks, o'er the rise, he is going —
Every night he turns into day."

On the highroad a plough-bound peasant

Is fixing his ox-gear anew,

And, passing, he hails me pleasant,

“Where to?”

— “Where to? I don’t know. The road only

So long is the guide of my feet.

I go. I don’t ask. My country?

’Tis the world — ’tis tranquil and sweet.”

Through wayside and town I sing trolling,

And some pitiful heart among men

Asks low, as the song goes rolling,

“Till when?”

— “Till when? Always. Take heart.

Men’s doors still open to me.

Always. Till on my worn pathway

Death comes, with a grin, to see.”

CALOGERO

“BUON riposo, signorino,”

Half he turned his face to go,
Half I held him lingeringly,

“Ma dove va Calogero?”

He looked at his feet, he looked at the moon,
And he answered gallantly,

“Nell’ albergo della luna

There is always room for me.

“Ma non sgomentarvi, signor,”

Quickly he stroked my arm;

“All my life is da fuori, —

There was never any harm.

Il Domineddio, là,”

He nodded up to the deep,

“Since I was born has made my bed

Where all at last must sleep.

“Così va bene. All the dead
Lie out beneath the sky;
'Tis best to be acquainted, sure,
Where one so long must lie;
And when 'tis still, some nights it seems
That it all belongs to me
From the silver tips of the olive-tops
To the silver edge of the sea.

“Joking? oh, no, signore,
I was only thinking in fun,
Modo Siciliano, —
Always a little sun.
È molto curioso
How many thoughts there are, —
Sempre di lei, all the nights,
Lontano, like a star.”

Siciliano vero, —
Sunshine, and night beneath!
Bravo ragazzo mio,
Who laughed with chattering teeth!

“Già siamo insieme,”

And close within my coat,
As I drew its folds about him,
I felt his throbbing throat.

“Sì, signor, I’m not happy
Unless about me be
Great spaces, large enough to hold
The mountains and the sea.
Nell’ albergo della luna,
Signor, there is room for two ;
Mio caro signorino,
There would be room for you.

“What is there in a grand hotel
With none to know or love you ?
’Tis better to have friends, signor,
With only heaven above you.
Nell’ albergo della luna
There’ll be none to say you nay,
And all will there embrace you,
And make you holiday.

“I cannot go with you, signor,
In that great world to be
That man has made like a house of gold, —
It was not made for me.
Caro signore, be my guest,
For you with me can come,
And in the world that God has made
We both will be at home.

“ ’Tis great, signore mio,
When the summer nights begin,
To take the blanket of the stars
And feel Him wrap you in.”
He deftly showed a gleam of steel
In the streaming street-lamp yellow;
“My heart is yours, my life,” — he bowed,
“Ed anche il coltello.”

And I beneath whose feet the weight
Of all this world rang hollow,
Who felt his warm arms round me fold,
Was half disposed to follow.

Still on my shelf the fan is
That he gave me years ago.
Che addios ! che fiori !
Dolce, bel Calogero.

FLOWER OF ETNA

BOY on the almond bough,
Clinging against the wind,
A-sway from foot to brow,
With the emerald sea behind ;
The illimitable blue,
The lone tree, and you !

Aloft gleams Etna's snow
In the bright weather ;
The green surf boils below,
Vast crests together ;
On the high hillside we
Plunder the blowing tree.

Boy of the mountain-cave
Beside the flower-hung pool ;
What snowy torrents lave
The bather beautiful !

And the waters drip all over
The sun glistening on their lover.

O blithest in the tavern,

Dark head above the wine ;

Blooms in the dingy cavern

A creature of the vine ;

Vine-bloom upon his glowing cheeks,

And from soft eyes the vine-light speaks.

He sports ; what youthful blisses

Of trifles there befell !

Magic the poet misses

The Bacchic boy could spell ;

He stuck red cherries in his ears, —

He smiled, — and slew three thousand years.

Once in the lone wood

Beyond the long red clover, —

Sombre, in solitude,

The gray rock hung far over ;

The parting bushes prest

Their young leaves to his breast.

Dear heart ! how had he learned
The world's magnetic soul ?
Sudden on me he turned,
While the rose twilight stole
Over shy features bright,
A face all love and light.

Fond boy, art cannot limn thee,
Bud of the white dawn's hour ;
And language doth but dim thee,
Youth's violet, Etna's flower ;
But I will bear thy face with me
As far as shines eternity.

ORFÈO

“TEACH me to kiss the Dorian flute,
The Dorian pipe to blow;
I with my own breath would salute
Great Pan before I go;
And may the genius of the place
Adopt me in the shepherd race !”

So, perched on Monte Venere,
I prayed a little goat-skin boy
To leave his herd and sit by me,
And teach me all the shepherd’s joy.
“What is your name ?” to him I said :
“Orfèò,” blithe reply he made.

I took the flute, I took the pipe;
No reed would to my breath respond;
He laughed to see me blow, and wipe
My lips, the pretty vagabond;

Still nature's child, though notes I snatch,
Was victor in that singing match.

But I was paid when, as behooved,
I threw into his shaggy lap
The gifts by ancient time approved,
My London scarf and Naples cap ;
And, as of old, the happy boy
Leaped high, and clapped his hands for joy.

THE FESTA

I HAVE seen a vision pure
As is the sea's white foam,
Full of the divine allure
Of beauty in her home.

With Giovan' as I was rowing
By the lilac sea-cliff's breach,
Where the pinkish houses glowing
Cling for foothold, each o'er each,
Came a clangor of bells blowing
O'er the indigo-lipped beach,
From the fishers' low church flowing
Down the brown nets' amber reach.

Now the loud bombs quick-resounding
Vivas to the saint declare !
How the festa is confounding, —
Salvos to the throne of prayer !

From the sea the boys race bounding
To the booming *strada* there ;
Comes the long procession rounding
The *marina* to the square.

Young girls, virginal and flower-like,
Each a lily in her hand,
Walk before the image tower-like,
Borne abroad to bless the land ;
And round about the maidens, bower-like,
Youthful bathers sun-bright stand ;
Still the salt wave, shimmering shower-like,
Beads their bodies golden-tanned.

Sweetly walked the maidens singing
White-robed, each a lily bore ;
Reverent stood the fair youth ringing
That fair scene by that fair shore.

ST. JOHN AND THE FAUN

I

O BLEST Imagination,
Sphered 'neath the eye's frail lid,
That in apparent beauty
Unveils the beauty hid !
In the gleaming of the instant
Abides the immortal thing ;
Our souls that voyage unspeaking
Press forward, wing and wing ;
From every passing object
A brighter radiance pours ;
The Lethe of our daily lives
Sweeps what eternal shores !

II

On the deep below Amalfi,
Where the long roll of the wave
Slowly breathed, and slipped beneath me
To gray cliff and sounding cave,

Came a boat-load of dark fishers,
Passed, and on the bright sea shone ;
There, the vision of a moment,
I beheld the young St. John.

At the stern the boy stood bending
Full his dreaming gaze on me ;
Inexorably spread between us
Flashed the blue strait of the sea ;
Slow receding, — distant, — distant, —
While my bosom scarce drew breath, —
Dreaming eyes on my eyes dreaming
Holy beauty without death.

III

In the cloudland o'er Amalfi
Where with mists the deep ravine
Like a cauldron smoked, and, clearing,
Showed, far down, the pictured scene, —
Capes and bays and peaks and ocean,
And the city, like a gem,

Set in circlets of pale azure

That her beauty ring and hem, —
Once, returning from the chasm

By the mountain's woodland way,
Underneath the oak and chestnut

Where I loved to make delay,
(And dark boys and girls with fagots
Would pass near on that wild lawn,
And at times they brought me rosebuds) —
There one day I saw a faun.

The wood was still with noontide,

The very trees seemed lone,
When from a neighboring thicket
His moon-eyes on me shone,
Motionless, and bright, and staring,
And with a startled grace;
As nature, wildly magical
Was the beauty of his face;
And as some gentle creature
That, curious, has fear,

Dumb he stood and gazed upon me,
But did not venture near ;
And I moved not, nor motioned,
Nor gave him any sign,
Nor broke the momentary spell
Of the old world divine.

IV

Love, with no other agent
Save communion by the eye,
Evoked from those bright creatures
Our human unity ;
There, flowering from old ages,
Hung on time's blossoming stem
All that fairest was in me
Or loveliest in them ;
And truly it was happiness
Unto a poet's heart
To find that living in his breast
Which is immortal art.

THE SICILIAN

HIS golden face, *un tipo*,
Was minted like a coin ;

On the reverse *un toro*, —

So stood his neck and loin.

The bull of Agrigentum

A thousand years had ploughed

The furrow of his fathers, —

Per Baccho ! he was proud !

To the beautiful old ages

His line ran straight and true ;

His blood coursed like the clover-tops

Beneath his cheeks' bronze hue ;

And all his skin was polished brown,

And muscled hard with toil ;

And when he turned his back, *Ecco !*

A classic of the soil.

A DAY AT CASTROGIOVANNI

I

ETNA

BIRD-WAKENED out of sleep my darkling
eyes

Saw Etna bloom and whiten in the dawn,
While over hollow leagues of crag and lawn
Brightened earth's edge upon the far-set skies ;
Now, volleying light, the lucid mountain lies
Transfigured, in the breath of gold updrawn,
Dim base to rosy plume ; and high the wan
Worn moon turns snow, and worships as it dies.

Then o'er the shoulder of that mount in heaven
Rose like a moon divine, celestial seen,
The Star to which all glory hath been given,
The orb of life whence all things here have been.
The nightingales sang on ; — and I shall see
No sight so mighty in tranquillity.

II

PROSERPINE

BY LAKE PERGUSA

LIFTED on hollow lands and grassy miles,
The lake low-girdled, to all memories sweet,
Draws heaven to itself; and wave-flung smiles
The laughter of the waters in the wheat.
It is a morn of May
Before the heat of day;
The swallow comes among the reeds to drink
The wind-blown cup of blue amid the green,
And sings his song; and near or far is seen
The plash of wild-fowl on the life-fringed brink;
See, every step I take
Stirs up a host of azure dragon-flies;
Floored with swift wings the path cerulean lies,
And round my knees flutters a living lake.
I pick the flowers that Proserpine let fall,
Sung through the world by every honeyed muse;

Wild morning-glories, daisies waving tall,
At every step is something new to choose;
And oft I stop and gaze
Upon the flowery maze;
By yonder cypresses, on that soft rise,
Scarce seen through poppies and the knee-deep
wheat,
Juts the dark cleft where on her came the fleet
Thunder-black horses, and the cloud's surprise,
And he who filled the place.
Did marigolds bright as these, gilding the mist,
Drop from her maiden zone? Wert thou last
kissed,
Pale hyacinth, last seen, before his face?

O swallow, on the rocked reed warbling long,
Dost thou remember such a morn of May?
There is a chord of silence in thy song,
Deepening the hush on which it dies away.
Ah, flower so pure, so white,
Winnowing the air like light,

Whiter than Phosphor in the golden morn, —
The bright narcissus she was wont to wear,
The star of springtime shining in her hair,
Wasted not thus, immortally forlorn ;

 Soon will thy soul be ta'en,
While still the bird's song haunts the warmèd sky ;
With all dead flowers that were thy light shall lie ;
Empty the barley-field, and cut the grain.

Oh, whence has silence stolen on all things here,
Where every sight makes music to the eye ?
Through all one unison is singing clear ;
All sounds, all colors in one rapture die.

 More slow, O heart, more slow !

 A presence from below
Moves toward the breathing world from that dark
 deep,

Whereof men fabling tell what no man knows,
By little fires amid the winter snows,
When earth lies stark in her titanic sleep
 And doth with cold expire ;

He brings thee all, O Maiden, flower of earth,
Her child in whom all nature comes to birth,
Thee, the fruition of all dark desire.

No living eyes have seen him save thine own,
And hence he bore thee to the dark deep under,
Far from the beauty of this heaven-bright zone,
Where the corn ripens in the summer thunder,
And all things throb, and lave
In color's rainbow wave.

Vainly we question things whose home is here :
No rose that ever bloomed, nor herb of grace
Crushed with sweet odors, ever saw his face,
Nor golden lilies laid upon the bier.

Nor only now I ponder
Hunger divine that beauty cannot dull ;
Who beauty loves, his soul is beautiful,
The master said, and oft on this I wonder.

O Proserpine, dream not that thou art gone
Far from our loves, half-human, half-divine ;

Thou hast a holier adoration won

In many a heart that worships at no shrine.

Where light and warmth behold me,

And flower and wheat enfold me,

I lift a dearer prayer than all prayers past :

He who so loved thee that the live earth clove

Before his pathway unto light and love,

And took thy flower-full bosom, — who at last

Shall every blossom cull, —

Lover the most of what is most our own,

The mightiest lover that the world has known,

Dark lover, Death, — was he not beautiful ?

III

DEMETER

HERE stood thy temple, on the mountain's
horn,

Lifted high over the subjected plain ;
Here rose the sower's incense in the morn ;

Here pealed his loud thanksgiving for the rain.
Demeter, goddess of the fruitful earth,
Our Mother of the Wheat, behold thy hearth !

Vacant the rock, of every herb swept clean,
Juts naked in the blue sky, — all is gone :
Tall grow the crops beneath ; the fields lie green ;
The rain cloud has not failed ; the sun has shone.
Were the hands crazed that reared thy altar-stone
And laid the first-fruits of the world thereon ?

Long generations knelt in this hoar place
And filled thy marble hall with prayer and praise ;
And sire and stripling of the mountain race
Paid here thy golden dues and went their ways, —

Thy children, — vanished all in Time's advance, —
Vanished their temple ! O dense ignorance !

Yet surely there are gods — thou or another,
Some happier offspring of eternal mind ;

Nor halts man's adoration, mighty Mother,

Nor all his yearning through the world to find ;
All things have had his worship, — earth, sea, air ;
Oh, unto whom now shall he lift up prayer ?

From old religion and that fair array

Of beauty and of love once eminent,

He turned unto the light, clearer than day,

Within his breast, and thought it heaven-sent ;
He throned invisible a world ideal ;
Again the thousand years their will reveal.

Crescent and Cross, with equal carnage wet,

Rode a long age the aye-revolving skies ;

They are declining now ; soon shall they set ;

But over man shall other heavens arise,
And other thoughts and other rites appear,
And other forms shall the old faith endear.

Temple and shrine have fallen to the ground ;
Minster and spire by truth deserted lie ;
Minaret and mosque have heard a far roar sound,
And tremble in their little squares of sky ;
All ancient superstition has been doomed —
Soon shall the stars see the old world entombed.

The sorceries of midnight and moonshine,
Brewers of witchcraft, dabbling in eclipse,
Went out long since on that dark border-line
Where the old world into the new world slips ;
Now go the gods from every land away —
So great a dawn is broadening into day.

And gladly we behold the great event
That frees our cities from the hooded fear ;
And joyfully we take the element
Of nature for our habitation here ;
Ours, not another's : but old woes abide ;
Not yet the soul is wholly purified.

We will not mourn, deserted by the gods
By us so much beloved, the gods divine,

Though on them also fall the solemn clods,
As on our earthen sleep where we recline;
Ill is he bred, and foolish draws his breath,
Who has not learned to live life-long with death.

Once, O Demeter, was thy woe as ours,
And, like our own, all mortal was thy mood;
Then, weeping, thou didst crave through orphaned
hours

Holy responses to lorn motherhood;
And when thy wandering through the world was
o'er,
Men found thee sitting by Eleusis' shore.

A light was in thy face; not of our sphere
Nor of the world Olympian that clear beam;
And from them passed the old religious fear
Who there beheld the Resurrection gleam;
And thou didst shrine in sacred rites that word
Which first by us was in thy temple heard.

Ah, desolate I found that pleasant shore
Where sat thy temple, once the awe of Greece;

From later gods we hold an ampler store,
And still the granaries of the world increase;
But that great word was moulded not in vain
Upon man's lips, the planter of the grain.

The spirit-throngèd world has passed away,
And shorn of terror is the sun's eclipse;
Science has dulled our wonder day by day;
No awe, no silence, lingers on our lips;
For deity in things we do not look;
Now closed to all the gods is nature's book.

Yet, though man grows in truth from more to
more,

Old forces through our mystic being sweep;
The soul remembereth its holy lore;
Some moods habitual to mankind we keep;
We believe; though time forever on the scroll
Buries the early writing of the soul.

Lo, I believed in all the gods in turn,
And know they have no being but in me;

All is the form of what doth inly burn,
Up from the fetich to eternity ;
Wherever man doth pray, and finds faith there,
I kneel beside him and repeat his prayer.

O Thou of many names, whom I invoke,
Thought in our souls and breath within our lungs,
One is the burden of the human yoke,
Though many are the earth's confusèd tongues ;
Christian and Moslem, Buddhist, Pagan, Greek,
A thousand dialects, the same prayer speak.

Illusion all ; for only man is real,
Dreaming on truth through symbols known to
sense ;

Of his own heart is formed each new ideal
That fires the nations with its eloquence ;
So spring-like through the centuries ever ran
The resurrection of the hope of man.

Thou wilt not answer, who in us art power ;
Yet quicker is the beating of my heart,

Seeing from year to year, and hour to hour,
 The joyful springtime in this old world start,
And in me feeling the fresh power of man
Unfold, and recreate what time began.

For now creation is, not long ago

 In chaos ; chaos reigned not on the deep ;
Order is all of nature that we know.

 Which, changing all, itself unchanged doth keep ;
And true creation is the soul's alone —
A light that grows upon the vast unknown.

O foul and bloody strife, since time began,

 Up from the beast to man's imperial mould !
O long his empire-toil, since he was man,

 The soul's confederation to unfold !
And many heavens he scaled ere Bethlehem's star
Hymned human love above all gods that are !

He doth prevail, who masters, age by age,

 The secret forces that through nature ply,
And with the changes of the mind grows sage, —
 Whose faith burns brighter as the old truths die ;

Truth is the cloud, moulded by every storm ;
Faith, like the rainbow, changes not its form.

He hath transcended nature — such a flame
Is nourished on his body ; he shall rise,
Remembering the altars whence he came,
To be for all the nations sacrifice ;
Nor only for far ages is the fruit —
Eternal beams did in his first loves shoot.

There is no truth save what to him is known ;
There is no beauty save within his eye ;
There is no love but what in him has grown,
And only in his mandate right doth lie ;
Justice and mercy his, and good and ill,
And virtue throneless save within his will.

No longer outwardly shall godhood shine,
To tend the flock, the ripened field to thresh ;
Nor only Christ shall harbor love divine
Within the tabernacle of our flesh ;
But every soul shall be that form of grace,
And universal man love's dwelling-place.

This is the faith, the crown of many years,
 That long has gathered prescience in his heart ;
 Now shall it run its course through blood and tears
 Wherever from the world the gods depart ;
 Sealed by this intuition, over all,
 That truth doth unto resurrection fall.

Oh, fain to love the gods, the gods divine,
 He clasped unto his breast the phantom fair
 That emanates from nature and doth shine
 From isle and mount on visionary air ;
 And thee he deified, O Mother-Love,
 And throned thee on the rock, his fields above.

Each race in turn a mighty harvest reaps,
 And shares with gods the glory of its toil ;
 And old divinity forever keeps
 Some portion in the consecrated soil ;
 And what was sacred once is sacred still —
 Lo, great Demeter, I salute thy hill.

Though born too late to bring unto thy shrine
 From scanty stores a poor man's offering,

The empire of another world is mine,
Whose only treasure is the lyre I bring ;
I lay it down upon the naked rock,
And on thy gates invisible I knock.

O Giver of the Corn, thy child is dead,
And Greece lies buried by the sounding sea ;
A greater sun uprears a mightier head
On a new land where many oceans be ;
And where the bison and the reindeer ran
A world of wheat renews the hope of man.

I thank thee for our food through sun and rain,
The summer's wealth, the winter's garnered
store ;
I thank thee for the rising of the grain ;
And ever thee I thank, and more and more, ,
For the hope hid in kernels of the corn,
Great Mother, vanished from the mountain's horn.

THE RHYTHM

THE rhythm of beauty beat in my blood all
day;

The rhythm of passion beat in my blood all night;
The morning came, and it seemed the end of the
world.

Day, thou wast so beautiful I held my breath from
song !

Night, how passion-wild thy throb, how voiceless,
oh, how strong !

The night was not more lonely than the day ; —
But death-deep was the glimmer of the snow-dawn
far away.

I remember the throb of beauty that caught my
throat from song,

And the wilder throb when passion held me voice-
less the night long ;

And life with speed gone silent swept to its seas
untold ; —

But oh, the death-white glory on the pale height
far and cold !

When passion gives beauty yet one day more the
rapture of my breath,

Ever a luminous silence comes dawn, and the chill
more cold than death ;

But rhythm to rhythm, deep unto deep, through
the years my spirit is hurled,

As when that morning on Etna came, and it seemed
the end of the world.

This is it to be immortal, O Life found death after
death,

From the deep of passion and beauty to draw the
infinite breath,

To be borne through the throb and the throe and
the sinking heart of strife,

And to find in the trough one more billow of thy
infinite rhythm, O Life !

TO THE VENUS OF SYRACUSE

O SILENT form of beauty ! O divine
Body of woman given to mortal gaze,
Round which the ever-moving sculptural line
Meanders motionless, and clasps the ways
Of all men's longing in its pure embrace,
Moulding the marble vesture of desire —
What deep power hast thou to exalt our race,
And lovers' thoughts ennoble and inspire !

This is the form of her who ruled supreme
The master-lovers of antiquity ;
Great spirits they were who could so fairly
dream,
And in a woman's form divinely see
The loveliness unto the world unknown
Flow into being in the breathless stone.

HELICON

O HAD I native power to sweep thee,
Lyre that awoke the Delian dawn,
And with the soul of music steep thee,
From old Hellenic poets drawn,
Who would their joys and griefs rehearse
In pure, pellucid Attic verse ;

Then would I loose in noble numbers
The heart I dare not now invoke
To stir the golden eagle's slumbers
And horses of the sun to yoke ;
Ocean would hush his waves to peace,
And heavenly stars their music cease.

THE DELPHIAN CHILD

HIGH over Castaly, on Delphi's steep,
A cabin stands where loops the mountain
way,

A ruin, girdled by the azure deep,
And o'er its rude stones giant crags hold sway.

Fain would I believe that He who for that home
Found humble room in such majestic air,
Marked, too, my path upon the pale sea's foam,
Foreknew my need and drew my footsteps there.

Two children stood before the dark low door,
A six-year boy holding an infant's hand ;
The single garment that his bare form wore
Fluttered and clung at the light wind's command.

Hunger made delicate his face and limbs ;
Eyes violet-pale that only knew to stare ;
Ah, did such boyhood lips pour Delphic hymns ?
And did Apollo wear such golden hair ?

Father and mother gone, and they left lone
Night-long and through the longer day — no
food ;

Facing the gray magnificence of stone,
Where no man came, the unconscious suppliants
stood.

They looked for no relief, they asked no boon,
But timidly upon the stranger gazed ;
Remote down western skies, and far from noon,
The parting lord of light divinely blazed.

Poor children of the god-deserted hill,
What bond with me should to this boy be
known ?

Yet when I came again their wants to fill,
His tender fingers never left my own.

Sweetly he took the orange and the bread ;
And o'er my hand the little prince of grace
Bowed beautiful that living golden head, —
It was not joy whose light was in his face.

Still closer bent that glory o'er my hand,
The infant majesty of life child-borne;
Then, shuddering from the far Judean land,
I felt the fibres of the whole earth mourn
Beneath my flesh, while warmly wandered there
From that child-mouth the breath angelical;
And as through palpitant and fire-flecked air
Upon Christ's hand I saw his kisses fall.

"World-pain!" I sighed; "how is my heart a pool
Of sorrow, brimming tears at each light touch!
Oh, in life's tragedy play not the fool;
Have patience! thou has suffered overmuch.

"Not in the globe of nature hast thou found
The Hider of Himself in things that be;
Not in the march of progress, world-renowned,
The Providence whose breath is history.

"If ever, only in some random hour
The miracle of flashing soul on soul
Shows pouring in thyself the secret power
That oft in simple deeds doth purest roll.

“Oh, of the Delphian not unbeloved,

With race and lore dowered deep, the son of time,
Save in thy soul how far from him removed,

This child, o’er whom Parnassus aye doth
climb, —

“Now going hence from great Apollo’s hill

And slopes of holiness by old faith trod,
Own humbly while he holds thy fingers still,

‘This Delphian child hath brought me nearest
God.’”

THE ISLE

ALL day the island-world had been
To me a finer sphere,
And all that I had touched or seen
Grew intimate and dear ;
The world of recollection slept,
It had no power to stir, —
So sky and sea and mountain kept
Me beauty's prisoner.

Far from the human-haunted shore
In sunk and cloven dells,
Deep nooks, where caverned waters pour,
I dipped in iris wells ;
There silence seemed a higher sense
Than is known unto the ear,
And life a being more intense
Than doth anywhere appear.

An arm's-breadth off she breathed the wild,
Her face was golden fair,
A Greek girl, supple, warm and mild,
And half her figure bare;
She stood so lightly on the mould,
So silently, so near,
I felt the forest round her fold
A phantom atmosphere.

And all about such faun-like bliss
Was breathing from the scene !
Those aery rocks, that green abyss,
Antiquity had been !
She glided down the dark-stemmed wood, —
Ah, had she known ! the grace
Of an immortal sisterhood
Was on her form and face.

Old isle ! what handed lovers oft
Wandered in thy dark grove,
With undropped eyes and touches soft,
Kisses, and vows, and love !

Ah, had she known, — would she have fled
And let the glamour die,
Or covert on to covert led
And answered sigh with sigh ?

I came where shores in moonlight slept
On the dark violet air,
As if in dreams their slumbers kept
A reign of memory there, —
As if a thousand years ago
Something from them had flown,
Ocean nor heaven no more shall know,
Nor any lover own.

TO AN IONIAN BOY

BOY of Mitylene ! thou
Of the immortal foot and brow,
Sailing o'er the harbor-sea
In my boat that hideth thee,
Fleeing from the Turkish power
That defiles thine Asian bower,
Seeking that far western shore,
Where thy hopes have gone before
Even with thy childish years
Through heavy toil and orphan tears ! —
Thou, whose eyes of wonder see
The American in me ;
Confident to take my hand
As an earnest of the land
That shall mother thee and thine,
Our common mother, thine and mine !
I wonder at thy courage, child,
Venturing the unknown wild ;

The ticket, hidden in thy sole,
Thy anchor where the great seas roll;
The White Star, pinned within thy shirt
Thy only talisman from hurt;
Earth's and ocean's waif thou art!
Waif of God! brave is thy heart!

Three hundred years have passed away
Since upon the Devon bay
Rowed the English emigrant
From whose loins my line I vaunt.
Centuries three their leaves have shed
Since on the rock he made his bed,
And helped to build with axe and book
The land to which all nations look.
Generations nine have wrought
To save and better what he brought;
Each, in turn, on land and sea,
Toiling for the next to be.
Lo, the forest fell like wheat;
Cities blossomed round their feet;

Came war, came peace, came war again ;
And now 'twas muscle, now 'twas brain ;
And now 'twas gold, and now 'twas blood ;
All things tried them, — firm they stood ;
And the land from sea to sea
Spread, and was filled with liberty ;
And serving mankind more and more
The race found sweetness at the core, —
A hand of welcome for all men,
And free to all the book, the pen.

So grew the world my boyhood trod,
Thy home to be, thy sky, thy sod,
And climbed Time's zodiac to shed
Heaven's horn of blessing on thy head.
To this end my fathers toiled ;
Take thou the heritage unsoiled, —
Years of ever milder power,
Years of ever wealthier dower ;
Make free to all the tool, the soil, —
So shalt thou share the mighty toil !

For now full circuit comes the wheel ;
The land a newer blood doth feel,
Thine and others ; take thy turn,
And with the new world's passion burn !
Unto thee we give the state,
Rich and glorious, free and great ;
To the old blood I belong ;
Swan-like dies it in my song ;
And all that was of life and love,
Behold I am the fruit thereof, —
Speeding on the ocean track,
To the old world turning back,
And now unto thy land I come
As the spirit travels home.

When again three hundred years
Have torn their way through blood and tears
(For this old world will not change,
Howsoe'er men roam and range),
Some boy beautiful with grace
Dropt from thy vanished form and face,

Shall proudly trace his humble line
To Lesbos, and to thee and thine.
Over ocean will he come,
Seeking the ancestral home,
Where freedom's war-cry with fierce clang
First against the tyrant rang,
Where Sappho loved, Alcæus sang.

Will he look on sea and sun,
On isle and mount, as I have done, —
Youngest-born of time's last race,
On his knees lay down his face,
Mourning in his lonely mind,
Finding what he weeps to find? —
The old forms gone from grove and hill,
The armor rust, the music still;
The gods of Greece long overthrown,
The temples razed, the statues down;
Scant relics of the brain and hand
That for the soul all beauty planned!
Ah, not for this his tears shall roll,

For plinth and coin, for bust and scroll;
He weeps the ruin of the soul.

O City of the violet crown !
O race familiar with the god !
O lyric isles ! O civic town !
The soul's first home was this dear sod !
O Greece, where first the race began
To know itself, and reason clear,
Thou the Creator wast of man !
Thou didst abolish human fear !
And still from thee he takes the best
That his dark spirit can enjoy ;
Because Greece held thee to her breast,
Therefore I love thee, wandering boy !
Nothing in all the world so sweet
As was the message of her feet ;
Nothing in all the world so dear
As now her human aims appear ;
Nothing in all the world so wise
As was the bright death in her eyes ;

O wisest, dearest, sweetest far,
In love and beauty, sport and war !

Then shall that far American,
Who out of thee shall be made man,
Looking on plain and sea and sky,
Unto his gods lift up his cry : —
“O Land of Promise in the west,
So to the shades go thou not down !
Nor with great Athens take thy rest,
My country of the starry crown !”

Fair befall thee, tender child !
Seek thou my home ; grow sweet, grow mild !
And fair befall thy race to be, —
Fairer than hath fallen to me !

THE MOSQUE AT EPHESUS

A GRAY shell with a ruined tower
Whereon the wild stork sees
On the Moor's arch the wind-sown flower,
Within, the agèd trees ;
Tranquil decay, and silence meet
To strew round old belief,
While every mellowing stone grows sweet
With time's unconscious grief !

Once as on Salisbury's moor I lay
Where the great stones remain,
I felt my very soul grow gray
And sink into the plain ;
A solitary lark climbed up
In the dark sunset sky,
And, singing, filled from heaven the cup
I drink of till I die.

Now world-wide pours the music rare

Within my listening mind ;

I hear the lark's song everywhere

That I the gray stone find ;

Thy lovely Mosque, O Ephesus,

Reverts to nature's plan ;

But dying gods bequeath to us

Their deathless faith in man.

I hear the song at Stonehenge heard

Abolishing gray death ;

Again the rapture of the bird

Is singing in my breath ;

It rises in my heart of hearts

And music floods my brain —

Old Mosque, o'er thee it fluttering starts,

And soars, and comes again.

Ye antique trees, grow fresh and green

Within the roofless nave !

The song that cleaves your heaven unseen

Shall nest upon my grave ;

And while it hovers o'er my breast
 Yon arch shall break to flower,
And the wild stork shall cap his nest
 White on the mouldering tower.

THE REVELLER

A VINEYARD SONG

UNWREATH the brow ! Thy cheek outvies
The golden grape in lustres rare ;

The rosebud of thy mouth denies

The living rosebud hanging there ;

Nor teach the radiance of thy eyes

To counterfeit the starry air ;

From all things else the beauty dies

When thou art near, though they are fair ;

Star, rose and grape but mirrors warm

Of loves that from thy beauty swarm,

Thy brief, incarnate shades ; in thee

The world returns to unity.

Unwreath thyself, and singly shine

Wine of the world, the rose-divine

Body of love, desire star-sown

That sparkles in the midnight zone, —

All beauty cast in passion's mould
In thee corporeally bright, —
O Dionysian bloom, unfold !
Crown, crown the revel's height,
Sweet reveller ! Thy golden cheek,
Thy rosebud mouth, thy radiant eyes,
A darling of the gods bespeak,
Who take thee to the skies ;
With hands divinely holding up,
As 'twere youth's flower, the vine-clad cup,
Drink deep, O heavy-breathing boy,
Crush on thy lips long draughts of joy !

Then bear with thee to heaven along
The wisdom of the vineyard song ;
Chime and charm thou mayst not bear,
For the shadows' source reigns there ;
And when thou puttest thy beauty by,
And shall at last unwreath thee quite,
Like stars that on the distant sky
Suddenly beam, and cease from light ; —

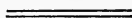
For who may know what shall befall
After the whole earth's funeral?
And who may know what there shall be
Without the senses' imagery? —
Ah, when the grape and rose shall shed
 Their bloom, and garden-mould shall be,
Reveal, all beauty being dead,
 Love's imageless eternity!

BY THE TYRRHENE SEA

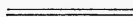
THE shepherd folds his white
Flocks by the Tyrrhene sea ;
My wandering thoughts at night
I fold in my thought of thee.

To the maiden her shepherd's kiss
And the flower of the orange-tree ;
Boy and girl have their bliss
And the nightingale sings for three.

Night-long he sings, night-long I hear,
And wakeful croons the sea ;
Night-long in wakeful music, dear,
I fold my thought of thee.



One last kiss and the morning star were one ;
 And in the chorus of the birds the sun
 Neared in his glory. I into the dark
 Ocean of slumber felt my spirit's bark
 Slip from the music and the shining vales ;
 The song, the glory filled the fading sails.



In thy chambers are many lovers, O Mediterra-
 nean Sea ;
 Here, in a niche of thy caverns, would sleep were
 strewn o'er me ;
 Slumber as deep as ever the sleep of the spirit
 may be !

THE REED AND OTHER POEMS

To the Memory

OF MY FRIEND, AND MASTER

AMONG THE LIVING,

CHARLES ELIOT NORTON,

I DEDICATE

THIS LITTLE SHEAF OF VERSE.

THE REED

AS when the poet, muttering low,
Doth feel his blood prophetic flow,
And reaches with his hand
For some diviner instrument
To give the coming music vent,
My hands moved to and fro.

“O Face Divine that bent over my youth
With sweet, victorious, battle-quick breath,
Who sealed on my lips the love of truth,
And taught my childhood the lore of death,
And I caught from thy bosom the glow and the lift
Of thoughts whereon I heavenward drift, —
Spirit of Justice, purest and best
Of the powers that spring from the human breast,
What is thy will?” I murmured low.
“I see thee sweep thy robe from the land;
As one fain to go I see thee stand,
And I, too, am fain to go.”

She looked as one who sees in pain
His armies waste away in vain
 And from the lost field turns;
His plans o'erthrown, ambitions fled,
Glory obscured, and comrades dead, —
 His bosom darkly burns.

“Thou hadst a reed,” she said;
 “Its notes were battle-born;
I would hear if its dumb stops keep
 Some echoes of its morn.
Sing me the hosting music
 Of men who march to death;
Bring me the reed of thy boyhood, —
 Though it holds but a little breath,
I shall hear on its faintest flute-note
 The feet of a million men;
It was a curious instrument,
 And seemed both sword and pen.”

I took the reed I threw away;
 I tried again its music rude;

A blush came over the laurel spray,
And the eagle rose from the wood ;
And the reed, as 'twere from a brazen throat,
With my boyhood breath blew a trumpet-note :

“Peace be with God ! armies and fleet,
Marshal them, launch them, after my feet,
Who am gone to the field where dying is sweet !
Youth, all the land over,
Your manhood discover !
Part, maiden and lover !
Swords, over the border to the realms of disorder !
In the shadow of war sleeps the fate of all lands ;
I am Justice, — the web of the world in my hands.”

“Lo !” she said, “where the loud cannon spoke for
the cause,
Half over the land the silenced laws !
Shall they bind with a pact the realms abroad,
Who maintain not the bond on their native sod ?
What noble assizes Americans make
With bloodhound and rifle, the noose and the stake !

The strength of his arm is the taskmaster's creed ;
How long will laboring millions bleed !
They mind ill the lesson of times gone by, —
When the silence is deepest, 'ware Truth's war-cry !
And the rich man's gift with his lavish gold
Is children's children to usury sold.
War hath its crimes, which may time decrease !
The crimes universal are crimes of peace."

Like a hand-fast child I held to the flute ;
 Deathly wan were her cheeks ;
Fain was I to be understood,
 As one who stammering speaks.
I pressed the reed to my mouth ;
 I spent my kiss of fire ;
The little stem enraptured shook
 With the glory of the lyre :

"With the popular breath the planet
 This way and that may roll ;
I am the Master of empires,
 I am the Lord of the soul.

Throne whom they will in the churches,
Crown whom they may in the school,
Who obeyeth me is the Christian,
Who denieth me is the fool.
I buried Egypt at daybreak ;
I doomed Nineveh and Rome ;
The starry spear of Paris
Late drove my judgment home.
With ships and arms let nations
Steel hard their cities and coasts ;
One word of the lonely Truth-teller
Lords it o'er fleets and hosts.
My heralds summon Asia ;
I mine the Muscovite ;
My Peace, my War, are equal powers,
The left hand and the right."

"Ah, here," she said, "how was my coming sweet,
And o'er all other lands was this land dear !
I thought to fix my everlasting seat
Hereon, and stay my world-wide wandering here."

Full heavily she leaned upon that lance

Which through the sides of nations makes its
way ;

Then saw I in her eyes a light advance

As 'twere the flaming majesty of day.

I blew ; on that weird flute

Seemed coming from afar

The trample of all human feet

That ever trod this star ;

Hard on Turanian rock,

And desert-soft on sands,

Poured the innumerable footfall

Of the children of all lands :

“Not for a single age,

Not for a favored land,

Not for a separate race,

Was heavenly Justice planned ;

But destined to one fold

Of science, art, and love,

Are the wandering peoples all
And every soul thereof.
Lo ! where the old East flames,
How great a light hath broke !
Lo ! what a burden falls
From Allah's patient folk !
Their feet are many millions
Who toward light traveling are,
Where world-wide beams thy promise
From Freedom's morning star.
Come, though grief be thy portion,
And war thy housemate be,
Thou canst not build on less than man,
Nor man on less than thee."

I rose, still fluting in the dark,
And to her side drew nigh,
And all the while new stars spread out
The interminable sky :

"Through many thousand ages
May man's ideal refine !

Yet here in nature's periods
The brute shows half divine,
Who thinks that he who loves the most,
And most denies his lust,
Who giveth all and taketh nought —
Only that man is just.
And still we dream beyond this truth
What deeper glories lie;
Come, Justice, teach mankind to live,
Teach nations how to die !”

On that dark strand she bent her head full low,
Far down, and with her tears my hand impearled,
And drew it into hers, and led me forth, —
“Come,” said she, “sing thy reed-song through
the world.”

LINES FOR THE INGHAM MEMORIAL AT
LE ROY, 1911

ONLY yesterday it was morning
And the spring put forth its leaves ;
We have lived ; and the summer is warning
Us to bring in our sheaves ;
And to all of us comes one thought
As we look to the westering sun, —
How little of all we have wrought
Was by our own hands done.

We have sown the homelands over
With the ancient seed of the home ;
Broad acres of wheat and of clover
Laugh again to the sun from the loam ;
But our joy as we go reaping
In the green field and the gold
Is to find the new harvest keeping
The color and weight of the old.

We remember the forms and the faces
Round our youth like an aureole ;
We remember the virtues and graces
That gave us heart and soul ;
But the crowning joy that we cherish,
The source and the stay of our powers,
Is to feel in our lives that perish
The work of their hands in ours.

Through times and seasons flying
We have found one thing stand sure,
One truth, among all things dying,
The years leave more secure ;
Only what is spent in giving
Escapes from wealth's decay,
Only what is built into living
Never passes away.

Of the dust are man's creations ;
Both dome and tower shall fall ;
Dark lies on its foundations
The roof-tree of our hall ;

But the homes the soul builds fasting
Of truth and art and song,
Unto the everlasting
Mansions of light belong.

We carve with last thanksgiving
The bare memorial-stone,
Where nothing now is living
And all but memory flown ;
With the flower that blooms here never
We clasp the long-loved name,
But in us it lives forever,
The Rose, that was seed and flame.

E. A. P.

ON THE FLY-LEAF OF WHITTY'S "POE"

IN the proudest of the nations
Was a wandering poet born ;
Skyward its accumulations
Towered, from mine and forest torn ;
Never state was so victorious
In world-plundering wars of gold ;
Never land so earthly glorious
Of the conquering lands of old.

From the star-bound pole of heaven
That spins in lyric mirth,
Where the Pleiads are, the Seven,
Came that vagrant soul to earth ;
Echoes of some lost existence,
Pre-natal melody,
As of angels in the distance,
Haunted his mortality.

But because the poet ever
Needs befriending, most of men,
And his soul reposes never
In the gross and citizen,
From the moment that he quickened
In the heavy air,
The heavenly spirit pined and sickened
Because no love was there.

Spectral thoughts — grim foes — assailed him
Only poets' minds evoke ;
Nought his beauty there availed him,
Dying, stroke on stroke ;
Long his genius pleaded, pealing
Melancholy chimes, —
As from Paradise came stealing
The supra-mundane rhymes.

Then his living turned to anguish
Of the demon-driven storm,
And men saw his glory languish
Into one pale form,

Ghostly, ghastly, — and his heart was torn with
Life's wan dream, Despair;
And the beauty he was born with
Faded in the sepulchre.

The proudest of the nations
Watched that starvèd power decay;
Heard the maniac lamentations
Where that soul of beauty lay.
Now, men whisper, genius glorious
Flees that barbarous strand forlorn,
Lined with turrets, gold-victorious, —
And no poets there are born.

“BEAUTIFUL WINGS”

BEAUTIFUL wings that beat the void,
At every stroke a deathless song,
A joy embodied, a grief destroyed, —
Mortal, you live not long.

But in the mind you still shall soar
O'er him whom you leave dead ;
The poet, buried evermore,
Builds heaven overhead.

THE DIRGE

I DREAMED I wove a shroud of flowers
For one who loved me young,
My playmate in the childish bowers
Where my first songs were sung ;
I dreamed the words, I dreamed the flowers,
And thus the dirge was sung. —

“There was a boy, a lovely child,
Who loved me long ago ;
I found him in the lonesome wild
Where buds of boyhood blow ;
I loved him in the flowering wild,
And laid him in the snow.

“Many years hath he been gone
Where shades of beauty fare ;
They are few who think upon
The road that he goes there ;

He put away the sun ; alone
He went to wander there.

“I laid his body in the snow,
That was a living flower ;
We were two buds that love made blow
The self-same hour ;
And I had many years to grow,
And he an hour.

“Violets, that were his eyes ;
Roses that his kisses were ;
Breath of jasmine be his sighs,
And his tears be myrrh !
Every flower that soonest dies
To him minister !

“Many years he travels far
In the flowerless land ;
None to honor him there are,
None to understand ;

I shut my laurel, leaf and star,
In his dear hand." —

Oh, is it that eternity
Hath in my dark flesh sprung?
Forty winters now there be
Since he I loved was young.
Oh, had, unknown, perpetually,
Spirit to spirit clung?

DISTANCE

FAR from my earthly home,
Far from my spirit's goal,
I seek across the endless foam
Pacifics of the soul.

To me the singer's lonely bliss
Far on the chartless sea !
But the soul of distance is,
Dear, to be far from thee.

TO A CHILD

HOW shall I thee remember
From springs of long ago,
Where in my own December
I think upon thee now ?
Thou comest in such changeful shapes
That memory from itself escapes.

A winsome elf whom beauty
And love alone made wise ;
Who never heard of duty,
Nor rules, nor sacrifice ;
He storms me with his kisses,
And tears, and sudden blisses.

What transports of emotion
His fond breast could conceive !
What heart-breaks of devotion !
What power he had to grieve !

From Napoli the memory swells;
What welcomes, what farewells !

Aye will I thee remember !

How should I thee forget ?

Like the New Year to December,

Press to my bosom yet !

Across a thousand leagues I hear

Thy "Buon Natale" in my ear.

A LIFE

I HEARD my ancient sea-blood say,
And wise in youth it counselled me, —
“When women lure, when men betray,
Break topsails for the open sea.”

I crowded sail on spar and mast,
And half the world I left behind;
But in my breast I held it fast,
That truth in men I still should find.

I set my life on swords of three,
My back against my castle wall;
Now should I cry, “*À moi, amis!*”
It is three ghosts would come at call.

Alone upon the “Far Away,”
And nothing human sails with me;
My bare poles dip, through sun and spray,
The dim marge of God’s outer sea.

DEATH AND FAME

I HAVE planted a flower on the peak;
My soul has cast its star.
Star and peak ! and dawn's a-streak !
And my tomb is where they are.

Though never a climber scale the height
Where my love exhales its fire, —
Though only the heavenly side of night
Shakes with my soul's desire, —

There, on the peak, a life's perfume !
There, cresting the dark, a star !
There, light that breaks upon a tomb ! —
And fame is where they are.

PEARY'S SLEDGE

RUDE sledge, that shalt the mortal relic be,
When he is nameless dust, of that strong
soul

Who won the great adventure of the Pole,
I read the lineaments of fate in thee.

Thou art the image of necessity,

Framed of denial, the wise will's control, —

“Least will do most,” — “Spare all, and win
the whole,”

Thou sayest, — “Art, life, are brothers unto me.”

So was that soul accoutred, in and out ;

So stood he on the gray roof of the world,
Gazing on heavens he lifted up from earth ;

Illimitable chaos round about

Knelt to his flag ; victor, beneath him whirled

Earth's axis ; and within him was man's mirth.

THE VOICE OF THE ANTARCTIC

“**I** HID within the everlasting dearth, —
And who art thou that comest? dreadful
thou art

Unto all Being who hast power to dart
Thy weird self-knowledge through creation's girth !
What is thy purpose? Wherefore was thy birth?
Thou of the mystic understanding heart !
What thinkest thou, seeing to-day depart
The last Unknown from the all-conquered earth ?

“What prospect, if not this, should give thee pause,
O Human Eye, whose lustre, age by age,
Spreads through the blind deep wherein thou wast
born ?

Of the Eternal Dark thy gendering was ;
Eternal Want has been thy pilgrimage ;
Oh, to what cold horizons bring'st thou morn !”

FAME

GREAT thoughts had swelled my breast since
morning light, —

Of one who, vibrating the ether, spake ;
And one whose ray abolished the opaque ;
Sailors, who drove from either Pole the night ;
Aërial Chavez o'er the Alpine height
Icarian borne, the eagle in his wake ;
The twain whose love unveiled the radium flake ;
And him who dragged the pestilence to light.

And when the long day drew to evening's close,
And on heaven's face the eternal beauty came,
So in my memory gloriously arose
The starry universe of human fame ;
And through the midst thereof uncounted glows
The light of souls who died without a name.

IN MEMORIAM

Charles Eliot Norton

READ BEFORE THE ALPHA CHAPTER OF THE PHI
BETA KAPPA, HARVARD, JUNE 16, 1913

WHY comes the wandered poet back
To tread again his boyhood track
Where all must changèd be?
Long since the brood of youth is flown;
The woods are still; the paths are lone;
He hangs on one memorial stone
A wreath of memory.

Envy me not, whose hand the Master took,
His firstling charge, boy-leader of the host
Of those who followed in the after-time;
Meet is it that I praise him, — who forsook
All else to travel the steep heavenly coast
Where what he told me of is won or lost,
And aye the lone soul to its sun doth climb.

He hardened me to breathe the burning frost
Where Truth on all things pours its naked ray ;
He taught me to neglect all worldly cost
And through that shining element make way
Where Reason doth the spirit of light obey.
Yet, with prophetic forecast, evermore
He brought forth things of beauty from his store ;
And in my bosom fed love's fiery core
With wisdom sternly tender, warmly high,
That through love only doth man live and die,
Howe'er his nature may through art refine ;
Thus had he from the deathless Florentine
Intelligence of love, the poet's power ;
And oft he led me to the Muse's bower.

O cherished privacy that seems my own,
And memories sacred unto me alone !
A thousand hearts such youthful records bear
Of him who gave their souls to breathe free air,
Broke up their pent horizons, winged their feet ;
And after him their wondering lips repeat

Honor and courtesy and truth ; each word,
Dropped from his mouth, seemed gospels newly
heard.

So did he lead them in those pastures sweet,
Loved of all youth, where Beauty's self doth dwell,
And the fair soul is its own oracle.

A grave demeanor masked his solitude,
Like the dark pines of his seigniorial wood ;
But there within was hid how warm a hearth
Hospitable, and bright with children's mirth.
How many thence recall his social grace,
The general welcome beaming from his face,
The shy embarrassment of his good-will
Chafing against the forms that held it still ;
Or, in more private hours, the high discourse,
With soft persuasion veiling moral force ;
The reticent mouth, the sweet reservèd style ;
Something unsaid still lingered in his smile ;
For more he felt than ever he expressed,
Then silent most when in his conscious breast

Most intimate with some long-cherished guest ;
He struck the dying log, and still the spark
Flashed on the incommunicable dark ;
Or by his open window's leafy screen
Mused on the world's inscrutable fair scene ;
Or, seeking for the soul its hermitage,
He, meditative, turned the poet's page.
Ay me, how many pictures line the wall
Of that long memory, and his face in all !

Others with critic judgment shall refine
Censure and praise, and his just place assign,
And the historic portrait nicely blend,
The artists' comrade, and the poets' friend ;
And all that doth in eulogy have end
Others shall speak, and lesser loves shall sing ;
My thoughts of him on vaster orbits swing ;
The star revolves about its parent fire ;
Still from his ashes leaps my young desire ;
Not what he was, but what he gave, is mine,
Inspiring the loyalties divine

That hold men true, and in their actions shine.
So full of heavenly impulse life may be,
And even on earth breed immortality.

Fain would I paint for coming youth to view
Him whose lone light, a generation through,
The fairest flower of Harvard to him drew,
Our guide and prophet of the life ideal.
He through himself best made his great appeal,
Lover of beauty found, in every art,
And that fair treasure could to us impart,
The loveliness that shall eternal be,
The spirit of divine antiquity
Immortal borne, whatever age assail;
So doth the soul of Greece o'er time avail.
This his chief charge, who from the fountain-head
Poured baptism on our eyes, and inward shed
On the young soul the drop of ecstasy
That makes the soul itself beauty to be;
We seemed to carve ourselves in noble lines,
And sculptured on life's walls our great designs.

What could we else, whom Athens moulded there,
Whose breath was Italy? The wise and fair
Of every land mingled that golden air
That bathed our youth. O life beyond compare,
When we shot up in that dear Master's care!

Ah, long ago the inexorable years
Dismissed us to life's labor with our peers,
Yet not from him divided did we go;
His counsel stayed us; still would memory show
The man we honored, who, all else below,
Laying of character the cornerstone,
Taught us, in this rude world, to stand alone;
Nor seldom, o'er the ever-widening years,
Far-shining on the public view appears
That private stamp that most a friend endears;
And proud we saw him, justly eminent
Whatever clamor rose, grow eloquent,
When gusts of folly swept the commonweal;
Still from his hillside-peace swift words he sent,
Whether the sentence sweet or bitter fell;

The man of principle, our Abdiel,
Still faithful found to his unshared ideal.

Now he is gone, O how the heart grows still !
How deep a silence lies on Shady Hill ! —
Joy be to you, ye listening youth, rejoice,
From whom another age awaits its voice !
In you is He who comes ; but we depart ;
In you beats high the rising century's heart.
O faring forth from this soul-nurturing air,
So may you live, so be your memory fair.

EPILOGUE

THE POET TO THE READER

FULL many a poem have I made
That never by the world was heard ;
I am the Fowler, not the Bird ;
I am the Body, not the Shade.

The image is an outward thing
Though in a magic mirror shown ;
But in their essence were they known,
Poets their lyres would downward fling.

Their choiring breath, their star-girt glow
Is matter's ; and their songs repeat
Pulsations of the ringing feet
That through creation run and go.

For only thus can mortals hear
The music, and the rapture guess
Of the invisible loveliness
Whose shadows enter eye and ear.

Lo, beauty's grace and love's desire
Are but the singing robes I don ;
Apart, the soul, its vesture gone,
Sits naked in creative fire.

For it, the soul, is increate,
And when in music it takes form,
Mortals are ravished in the storm
Of harmony at heaven's gate.

But could they hear the song I sing
When all apart I tune the lyre,
Their sluggard veins would run with fire,
And from their lips the soul take wing.

And were there one with power to bear
The full contagion of my breast,
Such glory would his arms invest
As if he clasped an angel there.

For though my music world-wide roll,
By thy own heart must it be sung ;
The master chord remains unstrung
Save when two mingle, soul in soul.

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